

My name is Jessica Theisen and I live in Milford. I fully support HB5372 An Act Concerning Dyslexia Instruction Offered in Teacher Preparation Programs. My daughter Isabelle is severely dyslexic. We knew something was not quite right early on and placed her in the town preschool assuming she would get early interventions. Not only did she get no interventions but we were continually told that she was age appropriate even though she could not read, write or do math. To make a VERY long story short, heading into 2nd grade we retained an attorney and all of the sudden our age appropriate child was receiving 15 hours of service-service with no fidelity and service that actually made the problem worse. When we pulled her out of school half way through 3rd grade, our beautiful and happy child was made to feel stupid, lazy and dumb. She presented as someone who had been traumatized, as we were told by a therapist we sought out to help our despondent child.

Our child had every red flag possible screaming a learning disability and dyslexia but it wasn't remotely addressed until an attorney was retained. She was placed in SRBI for over 20 weeks, with no progress and the reading specialist who had over 30 years felt it might be an attention issue. She worked with a special education teacher who was young and a couple years out of college who actually made the problem worse by giving the wrong pronunciations on letters. It is beyond my scope to be able to tell you if it was incompetence, lack of awareness or both, but the scars left almost 5 years later are still quite deep and I do not believe they will ever go away.

I am not naïve and understand the expense involved in special education is quite large. This, I believe is common sense legislation and find it crazy on some level that legislation has to be passed to ensure colleges are implementing programs with fidelity. I am also the parent of a child approaching college age and with most tuition for private schools averaging \$50,000 plus, it is ridiculous to think a student can be graduating and not have the skills necessary to accomplish their job. The special education teacher I spoke of earlier wanted so badly to help, but she was ill prepared by her college to assist and did not receive the support of her own bosses. Why should school districts be strapped with the cost when the whole point of college is to prepare an individual for the degree they seek? In my eyes the colleges should have been preparing these teachers long before any type of legislation had to be introduced. Having the colleges accountable for the degrees they issue is not only a no brainer, but it is the right and ethical thing to do. What would we think as a society if nurses got out of school and couldn't fully help their patients or worse caused forever damage to their patients because the college gave them the watered down course? Would we want an accountant to do our taxes that was only given limited information on preparing them in college? If the answer is no, then why is it ok for special education teachers to be ill prepared to properly educate these kids? 1 in 5 people are dyslexic. 48% of your prison population is dyslexic. How many inmates could be diverted from an even more expensive system had they found success early on? I strongly encourage you to support this legislation to ensure there is oversight on the very institutions that should understand and want to be part of the solution in remediating these kids. These kids deserve to feel success, as any other "normal" child feels.